

Uncertainty

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Summary: A little, one-shot sort of fic I wrote after beating Halo 2. A hypothetical situation where the Chief would have to kill Cortana. May contain spoilers if you haven't beaten Halo 2. Note, this story is my own interpretation, and is not in the game.

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Note: This piece was the result of thinking about the ending of Halo 2 a tad too much (yes, I have gotten Halo 2, like everybody else, and YES, I have beaten it already â€" no real surprise there, since most of us already have). The ending was disappointing, but on the plus side, it gives fan fiction writers like us something to do until the supposed Halo 3, which was what sparked my idea to write this.

Anyways, this was also the result of listening to 'Death of Cortana', a fan-made piece of music that was both haunting and compelling, which further inspired my attempts for this piece of writing. This is a little different from what I'd be usually writing, but since I've always wanted to write something purposeful, I guess I'll try this. I can't guarantee it will be any good, but it's worth a shot to see if I'm actually able to write with meaning.

This one-shot sort of fic is purely hypothetical - it's just my idea and interpretation of something that may/may not happen.

* * *

>The once glorious Covenant holy city of High Charity was now a glorious ruin worthy of a ghost story. The difference was, however, there were no ghosts here â€" only the remnants of now reanimated fallen, the Flood.<p><p>

A lone blast of a shotgun echoed through the long dead hallways. Acknowledging the now blown apart body of the former Elite, the Master Chief pumped his weapon's slide, ejecting the now useless shell. He checked his weapon â€" the tubular magazine was now empty, and the Spartan had no spare shotgun shells left.

Casting away his empty weapon, the Master Chief drew his only other weapon. Reaching into his belt, he pulled out the grip of the Covenant energy sword and activated it. The blue pulsating blade materialized and shot out from the two points of the grip, emitting a faint, eerie blue glow in the thick darkness of High Charity.

Guided by the glow of the sword and the flashlight on his helmet, the Spartan proceeded slowly along the hallways, constantly on the lookout for more Flood combat forms. The Master Chief's MJOLNIR armour was dented and scratched from the months of endless battle, and was stained with the blood of enemies and fallen allies alike. The path up until now was simple â€" fight the Covenant. But after the failed attempt to activate Halo and the civil war breaking out within the Covenant, everything had changed in an instant.

The Elites, the once proud and strong warriors who comprised the iron heart of the Covenant military, now felt betrayed. Their sacred duties to serve and protect the Prophets and enforce their will were now gone, taken from them and handed down to the primitive and barbaric Brutes. Their holy war against humanity was false â€" it was just part of the Prophet's scheme to find more of the Sacred Rings. Being lead by the Arbiter, the Elites have now broken away to form their own place in the galaxy. A few of the other raves of the Covenant followed, the Grunts and Hunters, both seeking to restore their culture, long since forgotten and abandoned when assimilated into the Covenant. Their faction, no longer seeing humanity as heretics, sided uneasily with them against the Covenant, now comprised of the Prophets, their Brutes, the Jackals, and Drones.

They were then joined by 343 Guilty Spark, who was now an excellent source of information regarding the ancient Forerunners. The Monitor's aid also came in the form of sentinels as well as the remaining guardians. With his help, the human-alien faction was getting closer towards the mysterious Ark, which would hold the answers to everything that has happened until now. But there was just one thing left to do.

The Master Chief stiffened as he heard laughter broadcasted through the city. The laughter belonged to that of a woman, the one the Spartan knew as Cortana. It was not clear how it happened, but Cortana was now the enemy. Her allegiance is still unclear â€" it is not with the Covenant, but it isn't with humanity either. She was now a threat, and would need to be taken out. It was a dreaded decision, but in the end, she is just another piece of equipment gone bad that would need to be thrown out and replaced.

That was how the Master Chief saw this when he was assigned to complete it.

He proceeded carefully and slowly into the darkness. His energy sword was ready, and he was prepared to lunge in a moment's notice at any sudden movement. Suddenly, a garble of words and static filled the air.

"Cortana?"

The gibberish continued, and then stopped unexpectedly.

The Master Chief was not scared, but the strange messages from Cortana were quite unnerving.

"C-C-Chief...I-I-I-a-a-am...I am everywhere!"

The Spartan stopped when he heard Cortana. Was there reason behind this, or was she going rampant? Still unsure, the Master Chief continued down the hallways deeper into the abandoned bowels of High Charity. He then came upon a closed door with a holographic panel beside it. Instinctively, the Master Chief placed his hand on the panel. As he did a pair of eyes flashed by, both then looked into the Spartan's gold visor. The eyes caught the Master Chief by surprise for a moment, which caused him to leap back with his sword at ready. The eyes were gone as fast as they flashed by.

Whispered voices entered into his helmet. They sounded like Cortana's, but it was not insane or broken, rather...pleading. The doors opened in front of the Spartan, who slowly and even more carefully proceeded in.

The room was huge and was littered with broken Covenant equipment all along the wall. A thick green fog floated in the room, a clear symbol of a Flood presence. Looking around, the Master Chief noticed the purple lights glowing in the far corners of the room. Strangely, they reminded the Spartan of somebody.

A console was located in the centre of the room. As he walked closer to it, it began to glow in the same purple as the lights. The Spartan then heard voice all around him "hundreds, thousands, all speaking at once. The voices sounded like they belonged to Cortana. Mathematical symbols and equations flowed up from the centre of the console, increasing in volume as did the voices. At its peak, a torrent of purple holograms floated up from the console, while the voices were now a flurry of soft sifting noise. Suddenly, the voices ended, and a single voice spoke.

"It's been awhile."

The torrent of holographic symbols stopped and then rearranged themselves into a single entity, pouring down as though filling an invisible container. When it finished, it left a petite female body standing in front of the Master Chief. Her purple holographic body had symbols, letters and numbers flowing throughout her body, while green cancerous sections occupied parts of her small framed body. Her thin arms folded over his chest, while her red eyes looked down at the Spartan before her. Her lips changed into a smile.

"How long has it been, Chief?"

The Master Chief stood there, at a loss of words. He was not expecting Cortana to be so...civil. Cortana unfolded her arms and hopped off the console. She stood about two feet shorter than the bulky Spartan. Her movement was fluid and smooth, not like the hologram she is supposed to be. Cortana walked up to the Master Chief, circling around him. Her face lit into another smile.

"You're not looking too bad."

Following her, the Master Chief turned towards her and looked her into her red eyes. They reminded him of her when she was plugged into Halo's control room. At that time, she seemed angry, but for now, she was certainly not what he was expecting. Her hair was still the way it was before â€" it had grown long in the front and gradually shortened towards the back her head. The reason for her sudden hair growth was currently still unknown.

The Master Chief tried to respond, but his tongue felt like it was caught in his throat. Instinctively he was about to comment on her, but right as he tried to say it, he could not.

"What's wrong?" Cortana purred. "You seem...uneasy."

Cortana's playful attitude was certainly not helping. She now seemed less of a piece of military hardware and more like an actual human being.

She folded her arms, and stared into the Spartan's visor, as if she was trying to tell what he was thinking by looking through his visor and into his eyes. She then turned around and she tapped the side of her head with one of her hands. A second later, a viewscreen appeared on the wall. Then a video feed came in. The Master Chief's stomach churned when he saw what the video was of.

"_Alright, you know what to do, Chief" Sergeant Johnson said, chewing on his cigar stub. _

"_I understand" the Master Chief replied, checking his shotgun.

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From a corner of the video feed, the Arbiter joined them. It was not hard to mistake his unusual silver armour.

"_Our intelligence suggests this construct has gathered into a single form at a single location inside High Charity," the Elite explained. "Besides the parasites, you should have no trouble finding, and destroying her. We will hold a landing zone within High Charity. When you have finished, get back there so we may evacuate and destroy the city. Good luck, Demon."_

Cortana then snapped her fingers. The video feed paused. Cortana did not turn around to look at him.

"So, you're here to...dispose of me."

The Master Chief took a step forward.

"Cortana, I-"

She held out her hand, signaling him to stop. The Spartan did so. As he did, his eyes examined her body. She was petite, and from how she held herself, she seemed so delicate and dainty. Was Cortana starting to act more like a human than an AI?

"What are you going to do, Chief?" she asked. Part of him wanted to see her eyes â€" to see if she was angry or saddened.

"I have no choice," the Spartan said. "I have to do this."

He wanted to raise his energy sword and strike her down. It would be quick and the sooner he would get out, the better. However, he couldn't raise his arm. The Master Chief could not get himself to do this. He mentally yelled at himself "he had his orders. He had to complete them. He had to kill Cortana.

She then turned around. Her red eyes stared into his visor, but the soft eyes were remorseful "saddened. The Spartan still could not move. He could not attack her. Looking into her soft eyes, he pondered why.

Was it because he cared?

"I wish there was another way" he said. The Spartan listened to his own voice "it was empty,

"But there isn't one." Her voice was now solemn.

At the moment, their eyes met. The Master Chief felt everything disappear around him; the thick green fog, the littered Covenant technology, the sword in his hands, his orders "everything. He felt as though there was nothing in the entire universe except Cortana and him. For the first time, he noticed the strange beauty she possessed with her deep eyes and petite body.

"Can you do it, Chief?" she asked.

The Master Chief felt he was thrown back into the reality of his mission. He felt the metal grip of the sword in his gauntlet. He had to finish his mission.

"I have to."

Cortana weakly smiled. When she spoke, her voice was barely a whisper.

"But can you?"

The Spartan closed his eyes and tightly gripped the handle of the sword. His muscles were tense and ready to react, but they could not move. The Master Chief could not move. He had to, but he couldn't. Something was preventing him from doing it.

His muscles finally moved. The Spartan's arm moved, as did the sword.

He kept his eyes closed for several seconds before he would summon the will to open them. When he did, he looked directly into her eyes. Her mouth was slightly open, as though to scream. Her eyes looked pained and saddened. Cortana's mouth moved as she mouthed her final words.

Cortana's body then began to fall apart. It began at her feet "bits fell off and disappeared. It continued onwards until the last parts of her hair disappeared. When her body finished deconstructing, the lights in the room dimmed and shut off. The Master Chief was now alone, save for the glow from his sword.

His mind tried to recall what happened. He had finished his mission
â€" he had won...

The Master Chief felt something on his face. Something moved from a corner of his eye and downwards, before his vision began to blur out. He blinked a few times to refocus. His eye felt moist and wet.

Were they tears? Was he crying?

His mind thought about Cortana. The more she came into his mind, the more the tears came. The Spartan stared at the energy sword in his hand. He shut it off, leaving him in complete darkness. He squeezed the handle, feeling the grip get crushed under his gauntlet. He then let go, and dropped it to the floor. Turning around to where the exit was, he took one last look into the darkness.

"Goodbye, Cortana."

The Master Chief made his way back up to the landing zone. Elites and marines patrolled the perimeter, defending the dropships from the Flood. He told Sergeant Johnson and the Arbiter that he had finished his work, and they were soon flying away from High Charity. As they flew further away, he then saw High Charity explode in the distance. Their mission was a success. They would now continue their search for the Ark.

Sitting down, the Master Chief's mind wandered again. He thought of the darkness he was left with after he had finished his work. He tried to remember what Cortana looked like, but to no success. She was now gone. He looked out of a window at remains of High Charity.

Only then could he remember her eyes.

* * *

>End Note: Well, this was certainly the most peculiar thing I have ever written. It took less time to write than usual, but was the hardest so far, since I've never written an emotional piece, assuming this even counts.

So, what do you think? Good? Bad? Very bad? Horribly bad? 'So terrible I feel as though I want to slit my wrists' bad? Feel free to tell me.

I know that most details here are very poorly described and thought of (you know what), but I just wanted to get the feeling right here, and try to convey a sad, remorseful type of feeling. Again, I'm not even sure if I've done alright.

So, feel free to review and tell me how me writing this is.

Oh, and PS â€" Eve of Fate CH15 is still being worked on, but after Halo 2, I am not feeling any incentive to work on it anymore. It doesn't mean I'll scrape it, but just give me some time â€" high school is really starting to kill me now.

End

file.